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NSC BRIEFING

~~12~~ January 1954

~~THE~~ MOSLEM BROTHERHOOD THREAT IN EGYPT

Egyptian government's dissolution on 13 January of ~~the~~ Moslem Brotherhood, a fanatical religio-nationalist organization, is military regime's boldest move thus far to eliminate opposition, *It is* ~~and~~ necessary *more* ~~one~~ if regime is to achieve a settlement of Suez dispute.

In outlawing Brotherhood, however, Nagib government forces underground its only remaining opponent and takes on ~~the~~ burden of its surveillance.

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I. Background of Moslem Brotherhood in Egypt

A. When outlawed, Moslem Brotherhood had extensive organization throughout ~~the~~ country with some 2,000 branches *containing several* ~~with possibly~~ *hundred thousand* ~~500,000~~ members. Affiliates in ~~the~~ other Arab states ~~but~~ *have* ~~with~~ much less strength. Only ~~the~~ banned nationalist Wafd Party claimed a larger following in Egypt.

1. Moslem Brotherhood, a religious society founded in 1929, sought to solve Egypt's social and political

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~~return to principles of Koran.~~ Members have always been fanatics and extreme nationalists with anti-Western bent.

2. By 1948, when outlawed for terrorist activities, and political murders, Brotherhood had become powerful political force and claimed membership as high as 2,000,000 -- conservative estimates put it at 500,000.

Opportunistic contacts with Communists reported *at various times.*

3. Despite ban, continued activities clandestinely until 1951 when officially reinstated as "cultural society".
4. Growing *public reaction to excesses of* ~~sentiment that~~ Farouk regime morally and financially bankrupting Egypt increased ranks of Brotherhood in year immediately preceding army coup of July, 1952, which demanded ~~purge of corruption in~~ government and a moral revival.

II. Past Relations with the Military Regime in Egypt:

- A. Following ~~the~~ *coups in* July 1952, Moslem Brotherhood came to

fore in Egyptian politics ~~and announced program which included~~

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~~purge of corruption, social and economic reforms, land redistribution and a new constitution based on Islamic principles. Brotherhood~~ ^{as} only political group in Egypt

which publicly supported military regime from start, and in turn regime put into practice or endorsed much of ^{Brotherhood's} ~~its~~ program.

B. When Egyptian government banned all political parties ⁱⁿ January 1953, Moslem Brotherhood remained as only quasi-political organization legally in existence in Egypt, ~~since~~ ^R regime ruled it a religious society and not subject to ban.

1. Military regime apparently not ^{PREPARED} to challenge strength of Brotherhood.

a. In past year reports ^{of} increasing friction between regime and Brotherhood ~~Brotherhood units largely~~

~~responsible for terrorist activities in Suez area~~

^{as result of} in 1951 ~~Government~~ ~~instituted~~ efforts to

establish control over all potential terroristic,

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paramilitary and "Commando" type activities.

b. Brotherhood also suffered internal dissensions

during this period. ~~"Supreme Guide," Hassan~~

~~Hudaibi's leadership of organization contested by~~

~~extreme faction headed by Hassan Ashmawi.~~

~~Open conflict between factions developed in~~

November 1953. Regime suspected of covertly

supporting ~~Ashmawi~~ ^{disidence} in effort to weaken organization.

2. ^{Late} Reports from Cairo indicate ^{had been} regime seeking opportunity to crack down on Brotherhood. Anti-government demonstration by Brotherhood students on 12 January ^{occasion} immediate ~~cause~~ for outlawing organization. Announcement in Egypt withheld until some 400 leaders rounded up. No immediate repercussions in Egypt, to outlawing where emergency security measures in force. Government, which has situation in hand, ^{to} continues report discoveries of numerous caches of arms and explosives to keep before

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public inherent danger of ~~the~~ Brotherhood,
~~organization.~~

III. Repercussion in Neighboring States:

A. Announcement of dissolution of ~~Moslem~~ Brotherhood in
Egypt caused ^{public} repercussion in other Moslem countries.

1. Police called out in Khartoum to break up Sudanese student protest, ^Demonstration witnessed by Major Salam, Egyptian minister for Sudanese Affairs and General Amir, commander in chief of Egyptian armed forces now visiting the Sudan.
2. In Syria, head of local branch and followers protested banning to Egyptian ambassador in Damascus.
3. Moslem Brotherhood officials in Jordan issued ^{fitter} statement accusing Egyptian government of "shortsightedness and selfishness".
4. Leader of Pakistan Moslem extremist group reportedly protested banning Brotherhood.

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5. Navab Safawi, notorious Iran terrorist leader who

Cairo
helped rouse Egyptian students to riot, has been
politely but firmly
~~carefully~~ detained and expelled from ~~Egypt~~ *Egypt.*

6. No serious repercussions in Arab states expected.

Brotherhood groups not strong enough to challenge
local authorities.

IV. Implications for the future:

- A. Egyptian government crackdown on Moslem Brotherhood will
for the present
give regime greater freedom of action in its relations
with West and dealing with Britain on Suez base.

1. Regime has capabilities of enforcing ~~the~~ *overt* dissolution
order.
2. Regime will probably restrict repression of Brotherhood
to action against its leaders and attempt avoid
antagonizing rank and file by reviving "religious and
cultural" aspects of organization under direct control.

- B. Drive against Brotherhood poses serious *longer range* risk for Egyptian
regime.

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1. Its two strongest opponents, ~~the~~ nationalist Wafd Party and ~~the~~ Brotherhood, now both underground. Both have extensive organizations which may be expected to be used against regime.
2. Brotherhood has considerable experience in terrorism and assassination.
3. Failure of regime to achieve a settlement with Britain palatable to Egyptian people or to promote impressive economic reforms will invite its opponents to act with widespread popular support.
4. In such a situation, ~~the~~ regime has choice of getting out or attempting to hold by sheer military force.

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